Princess Rags and Tatters

Harriet T Comstock

Barbara Harratt

To Barbara,
from her little friend
Carol.

1909 -

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PRINCESS RAGS AND TATTERS

"Now Mudden let us
sail away to our garden".

Princess Rags and Tatters

by
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Garden City, New York
Doubleday, Page & Company
1912

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THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS, GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

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PRINCESS RAGS AND TATTERS

CHAPTER ONE

THE PRINCESS

This story is about a little girl who made believe that she was a princess. Her mother had told her much about princes, princesses, castles, knights, and such things and she found that by thinking a thing very hard and for a long time you could almost believe you were what you thought yourself — and above everything she longed to be a princess. So she walked as a princess should: shoulders thrown back, head carried high, and all the rest; and she was so slim and pretty that even in her raggedy gown people turned and looked after the dear little thing.

She had the very softest pink and white cheeks, and she had two perfectly ravishing dimples — one in her left cheek, one in the middle of her cunning, round chin. Her hair

was as light and fluffy as the down on a wee duck's breast; it was about the same colour, too, just the goldiest kind of gold.

And then her rosy mouth! I declare when I think of her mouth I forget all the rest of her beauty. It was turned up at the corners because she saw so many funny things in life to laugh at that there was really no use for those charming corners to droop.

Her nose? Well, I must confess it was a bit of a pug, but then any other kind would have marred the exquisite little face.

But her eyes! How can I tell you about her eyes? I never saw any other eyes like them. Have you ever seen a clear pool of water out under the skies surrounded by dark, ferny edges? Well, the Princess's eyes were more like that than anything else — her lashes were like the ferns.

Now when the sun shines on the pool you remember how blue the water looks? That was the colour of the Princess's eyes!

But when clouds gathered — oh, my! how dark and different both eyes and pool seemed.

I might just as well tell you at the start that the Princess was often ragged and dirty, for just at first she was a lost princess and, until she came into her own, things went rather badly with her.

Our little maid's real name was Janet McDonald, and she lived on the third floor back of a big dingy tenement with her queen-mother.

When Janet was a tiny baby her father and mother had come from Scotland to America. I'm sure I do not know why, for over there they had lived in a cosey little house on the edge of a magnificent garden, over which the father had ruled as head gardener.

Perhaps Mr. McDonald thought that a little house and garden of his own in the new country would be better than anything the old country could give, so he came to take his chance.

But things went wrong: he never had any kind of house at all, not to mention gardens! He grew sick and presently died, and then the sad little mother went from one place to another with her pretty baby until she reached the back-tenement third floor — and there she bided until — well, you must be patient.

She did the most beautiful laundry work, and so she managed to keep the poor home, buy food and clothing, and find time to tell Janet about the wonderful garden over in Scotland.

Now it may seem queer, but as soon as Janet could laugh and talk the dim rooms began to be cheerful: the white-faced mother commenced to smile, and a new and happy light shone in her eyes. How could she be sad all the time while that jolly baby crowed and gurgled and then said, "Buful mudder," when she was only a little over one year old? And when she walked — why, then — sad-

ness had to go, for the bonny little creature chased it right out of the door!

She was so funny, and said such odd things. She had a habit of cuddling up on the floor, like a white ball of a kitten — holding her dimpled knees in her pretty arms. When she sat that way, with her big eyes round and shiny, the mother always knew she was going to say something. And she always did. At first it was soft little coos of love, and "Buful mudder": then by and by it was:

"I see lovely fings, and when I is a great big dirl I is going to get everything lovely — for mudder!"

Then she would fancy the dearest things that she had never seen except in the pictures of the few old books upon the shelf. Of course the mother could not carry the baby to park or country, because she was nearly always washing, and trees and dancing rivers do not come by themselves to third story backs!

But there were the evenings when the hard day's work was done! By the window, opening into the dull yard where the rear of another grim house shut out the view, stood a low creaky rocking chair. Into that the weary mother would drop and gather her little girl, while the early shadows — oh! so early— crept around them. And then for magic!

"Creak! creak!" whispered the old chair as it started on its voyage; and Janet would laugh and say:

"Now, mudder, let us sail away to our garden." At first it was the dear garden off in Scotland. The mother made it so plain that Janet knew every path and cranny. Then came stories of princes and princesses, and fairies and elfs, and all the dear things that lie knee deep in Scotland's tales for small boys and girls. And of course Janet placed them all in her garden. There they lived and capered, and had the merriest times. It was odd enough, to be sure, to

have those princes and princesses playing with gnomes and fairies in the most matter of fact way, but Janet made the whole thing easy, and they had the maddest larks. One creak of the old rocker, and the tenement that stood guard over the back yard just melted away; and there were the big ocean, and the brave ship; and then the splendid garden and the royal folk, and their winged companions, and then? why a little golden head on mother's breast and a Scottish lullaby floating through the darkness — and dreams, — oh, such dreams!

No wonder then, that sweet Janet grew to be a queer little girl. The other people in the tenement resented it at first because she was not allowed to play in the halls and on the stairs with their children; but presently they whispered that "the odd child was ——"

And then they shook their heads and looked sorry.

By and by a new fancy seized Janet.

"Mudder," she nodded over her little huddled knees, "I cannot see you!"

"'Tis only the steam, bairnie, that is so thick to-day," laughed the mother by the tubs.

"But you are here, mudder?"

"Surely, dearie; always right here by Janet lass."

"Mudder dear, *I* know! I am one of the princesses out of our garden, and you are my fairy mudder. We are lost, mudder, just surely lost!" And then a merry peal of laughter rang through the steam.

"Mudder, we must find our garden!"

"We'll search for it, lass."

"Yes. And, mudder, we'll know it when we see it, won't we? And now, mudder, I'm a-coming." And true enough, the giddy little thing would dash through the steam and clutch the mother around the knees, and what could the mother do but snatch

"Dreams- Oh! such dreams."

the dear Princess up and kiss her, even if Mrs. Jones's washing did have to wait?

Sometimes Janet went with her mother to carry home the washes. Those were wonder times. And the street cars became chariots; and always Janet's big eyes were on the lookout for the garden! Many people stared at the beautiful little face, and some smiled gently. Once in a while a lady would bend and kiss the dimpled cheek. Janet smiled at them all, and nodded prettily, but nothing ever made her forget her garden.

Dear little lost Princess! Of course in time even Janet found her way down the dark stairs alone. It had to come, and she was five years old when the gutters knew her as a playmate. But the noisy rabble and the mud piemakers were soon distasteful to a princess with fine dreams. The other children, too, were rather afraid of her, and made her feel ill at ease, so she wandered down the street by herself. It

was wonderful, the strange freedom! Janet meant to explore the whole world in time, for she never meant to rest until she found that garden of hers.

Oh! how she loved the bigness of the streets, and oh! how she thrilled as she wondered what might be just around the corner; but she never got lost; always she found her way back to the third floor, the creaky rocker, and the queen-mother of the tubs.

And so it happened that one day in her wanderings the Princess came upon the beginning of wonders. It was a glorious September day — a day that made even common folks glad to be alive, while, as for the Princess, she was radiant! Down the grimy street she went, singing a gay little song, and her beautiful eyes were full of sunlight. She swung along, never heeding any one, but with a glad, sure feeling in her heart that "sumpin was a-going to happen!" And it did.

How far the dear child wandered she did

not know, but suddenly she came upon an open door of a low, plain house in a decent street. Through the half-open door came the sound of sweet voices singing, softly singing. Janet pushed the door wider and peeped in. It was a big, sunny room, and all around the walls were lovely pictures hung just high enough for wee boys and girls to see them. On the floor of this charming room sat a circle of dear children with folded hands and bent heads; and they were singing a tender song of praise to the good Father in heaven whom Janet knew all about. Standing near the children was a tall lady. For a moment Janet thought she was lovelier than the queen-mother when she sat in the old rocker; but then she saw that the lady was only — different. At that instant the lady looked up and saw the pretty little stranger, and for a moment she stared and drew her breath in sharply.

Janet smiled; the beautiful lady smiled

back and beckoned. Without a quiver the Princess tiptoed across the room and nestled quite close to the tall lady.

She had found the road to her garden, dear child! and a great contentment filled her heart.

When the tender song was over the devout circle opened its eyes and there, in the safe shelter of dear Miss Rose's arms, they beheld the Princess Rags and Tatters.

"This is a little stranger friend," said the teacher, "and I hope she will tell us all about herself. I am sure she has a pretty story."

It was natural for Janet to speak about herself in story-fashion, you see; and she always confused the real and the unreal; so she promptly began:

"I'm a lost princess." One boy looked at her ragged clothes and began to laugh, but a warning gesture from Miss Rose made him as solemn as the others. "And I'm lookin' for my garden, and then mudder and I are going there to stay."

"Where do you live, dear?" asked Miss Rose, "and what do they call you in the place you are staying until you — find your garden?"

"Oh, my name is Janet McDonald, and mudder and I live in Mulberry Lane. I'm just out lookin' for my garden."

"Well, little Princess, won't you stay with us for a while and play with us? I will walk home with you by and by."

Janet was only too ready. All this was exactly to her liking. The circle made room for her, and in five minutes she was as welcome as the sunshine. Miss Rose had only to repeat the words of the pretty songs two or three times, and Janet sang them as sweetly as the other children — the tunes came by themselves. And then, how agile she was in the games! And when they all made up a story, you should have heard the Princess! She took that entire circle, and Miss Rose, too, into the garden of her love and fancy.

They listened to her with rapt faces, and Miss Rose really looked queer. Into the tidy kindergarten the fairies and gnomes ran riot, and when at last the gay little voice ceased a wild cry of, "More! tell it again!" rang over and over.

The ragged little Princess partook of the eleven o'clock luncheon around the low table. The crackers and fruit disappeared from before her in good healthy fashion, and she was full of merry capers. The children were bewitched, and begged to escort her home in a body, but Miss Rose sent them upon their different ways, and took Janet home herself. They found the little mother hidden in the steam, but they drew her forth and told her all about it. And at the end she promised that Janet should go every day to the wonderful kindergarten; and that was the really, truly beginning of this story that I am going to tell you about the lost Princess Rags and Tatters.

CHAPTER TWO

CHARLES THEODORE AVERY

This would not be a story worth reading if there was not a boy in it; and so we must begin right now with Charles Theodore Avery. He was seven years old, and he lived in a great big house that stood surrounded on three sides by a splendid garden.

The back of the house came close to a high, vine-covered wall; but if you stood at the second-story windows you could peep *over* the wall and look down upon a "common street."

Angelina, Charles Theodore's nurse, resented this very much. She did not like common things, but Theodore loved them!

There were "common people" on the "common street," and they were always doing unusual things. They all seemed to be so free and always going somewhere!

Charles Theodore Avery never did things and never went anywhere. At least he never did anything he wanted to, and never went where he longed to go. He was the most wretched little boy you ever saw! There, in the great fine house, with two rooms for himself, and one of them opening on the back wall, with every new toy that was invented, he was utterly miserable, and he took it out, I blush to say, in tantrums and scowls. He could look lovely, indeed beautiful, but the scowls were commoner than the smiles.

They were always doing something with Charles Theodore Avery from the time he got up at the scientific hour until he went to bed at another scientific hour.

The nursemaid, Angelina, woke him every morning, and compelled him to take a cold bath. Oh! how Charles Theodore loathed Angelina. Then when the cold plunge and deadly rub were over, this poor boy was

encased in elegant and proper morning clothes. Then he had breakfast alone in the dining-room, with a cast-iron butler looming in the background, and Angelina hovering near by, challenging every mouthful. Sometimes he was eating too fast; sometimes too slow. Then his bites were too big, or he was "crumby." After the doleful meal the French governess took him into the cheerless but properly appointed classroom at the top of the house, and by the time she had finished with him he felt he hated her worse than he hated Angelina — only he could not express himself as freely in her own language. Then came lunch in the dining room, with the same stony butler, but with the French governess to take the flavour out of American dishes by insisting that he should call them by French names. If he miscalled them they were taken away. For a couple of hours after luncheon he was supposed to be free to play, either in his own

rooms or in the fine garden, but Angelina always hovered in the near distance and spoiled everything. At four o'clock the carriage drove up to the door and Charles Theodore was haled forth for an airing. Sometimes Angelina was with him: occasionally the French governess; and oh! very, very rarely the beautiful mother. Charles Theodore Avery did not feel very well acquainted with his mother, but he admired her, and was wonderfully proud of her. He always sat straighter when she was with him; and he always smiled at her when she glanced his way. Often, after a drive with her, when he lay in his dark room in the evening, he used to fancy how it would seem if *she* — he always said *she* instead of mother — should steal softly in and sit beside his bed! He felt if it were quite dim, and her beauty did not frighten him, he might cuddle up close to her and tell her things that swelled up in his lonely little heart until they hurt.

But she never came. She was always going somewhere; and, besides, Angelina said that it was most unscientific to disturb children after they were put to bed. You never heard of any one who knew such a number of disagreeable facts as Angelina! Yet with all this Mrs. Avery loved her boy and was very proud of him.

"Some day, some day," she used to say when she looked at him. "Some day, laddie, we will walk side by side."

You see Mrs. Avery's world, outside her home, was a very big, glittering world. Sometimes the dazzle blinded her and made her forget that a lonely little boy needed her. She was a great singer and, by another name, was known the world over. It was years before Charles Theodore knew his mother's other name! It was to be the Princess that first drew them close — Princess Rags and Tatters.

Now while the Princess was seeking her

garden, Charles Theodore — let us call him Teddy — was trying to find his grandfather. There was a mystery about that grandfather; he was talked about in whispers among the servants, but they would never answer questions. However, this much Master Teddy learned:

He was a proud old gentleman and would have none of them! He had disapproved of something Teddy's father had done long before that poor young father had died away over in Italy.

All this puzzled Teddy very much, and he wondered why he did not dislike the unknown grandfather, but he did not. He had a feeling that if he could have a good man-to-man talk with the old gentleman things might take a turn for the better.

One day he startled his mother by asking, "Mother, where is my grandfather?"

For a moment Mrs. Avery only stared, then she said:

"Where did you ever hear of your grandfather?"

Teddy repeated some of the things he had overheard.

"Never speak about him again, dear," said the mother at last; "he — he — is lost to us!" And then she cried softly under her violet sunshade. Charles Theodore was beside himself with pity. He grew bold, and patted one of her hands, and said sturdily: "Never mind, mother!" But in his heart Charles Theodore Avery determined he would find the lost grandfather.

The next day was stormy, and he had to take his pleasure in the two rooms upstairs. Angelina, as usual, had her eagle eye upon him, and everything he tried to play she interfered with.

"Why do you not play like a little gentleman?" she asked, when in a rush of natural spirits he tried to climb the table with his modern fire engine, and actually *do* something.

"'Cause I'm *not* a gentleman. I'm a fireman!" Teddy replied, and sad am I to say that he made a face at Angelina.

"Charles Theodore Avery, come down!" she commanded. "Now say, 'Because I am *not* a gentleman.' What would Madame say to such language? And beg my pardon at once for that face, or to the closet you go!"

The window was open; and, as poor Charles Theodore had no intention of begging Angelina's pardon, he snatched up the fire engine as he was being dragged to the closet, and sent it hurling over the wall and into the street beyond! They heard it crash upon the pavement and he was glad of it.

The darkness and the stillness of the closet calmed him. He was glad to have Angelina out of sight, and it was a good place to plan running away. More and more he was determined to find his grandfather and have it out with him.

After a sufficiently long time Teddy opened

the closet door and sallied forth. Angelina was very silly. She always thought Teddy *stayed* in the closet — she thought shutting naughty boys in the closet very scientific — but Teddy always came forth when he wanted to and ran back when he heard his jailer returning.

Teddy strolled to the open window and looked drearily out.

It was a drizzly, mean kind of day, and the common street in the rear looked uncommonly common.

Suddenly Teddy's big brown eyes opened with interest. Out in the common street a free untrammelled creature was doing something! The creature was no other than the Princess, and what she was doing was mending the broken fire engine with a piece of string and singing merrily as she did it.

Teddy watched her in wondering envy. She sat on the curb, her dear little feet shod in the shabbiest shoes, her thin dress quite

wet, and her glorious little head bent over her task unmindful of the drippy rain. Just fancy such freedom! Finally the toy was mended, and then, never heeding the passers-by, the Princess began to play in the maddest fashion. She gave a little whoop, and cried, "Fire! fire!" Then she scampered along, dragging the engine, until she reached the opposite side of the narrow street. From there she pointed the tiny rubber hose right up toward the window where Teddy stood.

"I'll put you out!" she screamed. "Don't you be frightened; I'll put you out!"

For a moment Teddy did not know what she meant: then, because way down in his lonely little heart he was a real boy, he laughed and called back:

"All right! Wait, I'll throw more things!"

This he proceeded to do. Out went the five-dollar lamb which bleated so realistically; next a box of handsome blocks followed and were scattered, some in the yard, and some

in the street. An electrical machine was raised to take its turn, while Teddy, beside himself with excitement and rapture, was prancing up and down and screaming with laughter, when Angelina came in. No wonder Angelina rushed at him with real terror on her face. She caught his upraised arm, slammed down the window without taking a thought as to the cause of this scene, and then she said:

"Master Charles Theodore, put out your tongue!"

"I — won't! I — will not!"

"Let me feel your pulse!"

"Shan't — shall not!" There was a tussle, and Angelina gripped the pulse.

"Fever!" she panted. "Now to bed, Master Charles Theodore, and I'll telephone for Doctor Meredith, but mind what I say, if you tell that I put you in the closet the Bouncer will catch you as sure as sure can be."

So Teddy was put to bed and Doctor Meredith came and looked wise, ordered medicine and quiet, and finally Teddy was left with nothing to keep him company but the thought of the Bouncer.

At five o'clock Angelina came silently into the room and offered a cool drink. Teddy accepted this and, without thanking Angelina, fell to sleep. Then it was that he saw a doorway before him and over the doorway these words: "The House of the Bouncer." Queer as it may seem, although Teddy could not read well, he knew those words at a glance.

Cold shivers ran over him — he was in for it now, although he had said never a word about the scientific closet treatment. The poor boy tried to plunge his hands in his pockets and draw up some comfort, but with horror he realized that he was in his pajamas and there were no pockets! Then he tried to whistle, but his lips were stiff and

unmusical. Alone in the land of the Bouncer, he must see the thing through. The door was swaying inward — swaying for him, and Teddy marched on. It was a great empty house inside and fearfully, terribly still! Presently something happened! A damaged fire engine hobbled in; then other toys in a more or less crippled state. They were alive and could speak, and this is what they said:

"Mend us; make us as good as new!"

"How can I?" whispered Teddy from his quaking depths.

"Ha! ha! you know how to smash us; now unsmash us!"

This was dreadful. And all at once Teddy knew that in the Bouncer's house all his misdeeds were alive and ready for him! In they came. The "face" he had made at Angelina! He shrieked aloud at that. And the "wont's" and "shan'ts" went hurtling around like brickbats. Teddy dodged them, but they kept him busy.

Then from out of this mad confusion a merry voice called to him; he looked up. There at the door stood the little girl of the common back street. Teddy was never going to forget that sweet face; he would know it when next he saw it.

"I'll help you!" said that kindest of kind voices; "we'll mend them. You see it pays to put good things in the Bouncer's house, for then when you come visiting you will be glad instead of sorry."

Then Teddy woke up and he was hot and trembling, but the calm moon was shining in and it cooled and comforted him. Quietly he slipped from the bed and ran to the back window of his other room. The common street was empty and still — no radiant little maiden sat upon the curb.

But when the order had been given for Teddy to go to bed that afternoon the Princess had waited for some time, hoping against hope that the window might again be raised

and the lavish hand hurl out more blessings. However, when no more were forthcoming, she gathered up her harvest and strolled away. Life was rose-coloured and glorious for her. With the broken toys and the kindergarten what more could she ask? Was there ever such a rich and happy princess?

CHAPTER THREE

THE WRONG GARDEN

Miss Rose loved all her little flock, but the dear little lost Princess was the dearest of all. She was so funny and bright. She got all snarled up in the real and the unreal. She was so full of fairy lore and common-sense! She was so brave and true and fearless!

Miss Rose bought her a whole suit of neat, new clothes, and the pretty pink dress was enchanting, but on the third day the teacher noticed that the little gown had slits and tears all over it; one plump white shoulder, indeed, shone through. It was Spring now, and while Janet did not need the covering for warmth, she did need it to be tidy.

"Dear child," said Miss Rose, "how did you tear your pretty dress?"

Janet twinkled and dimpled, then replied softly:

"First scissors and then fingers."

"You did it purposely, Janet?"

"Yes'm." Miss Rose said nothing more then, for she saw the other children laughing. They always laughed when Janet twinkled. After school, however, she walked to Mulberry Lane with little Tatters.

"Janet, dear," she coaxed, "tell me all about it."

"Well, first I meant to cut pretty holes, like we do in the paper, and make myself a lace dress, 'cause I'm a Princess, you know. Then when I saw it — it wasn't lace, I was so sorry, I just had to find some comfy, so I went out, and then I felt the warm sun shining in the holes, and the soft breezes tried to get in on my arms and neck, and they felt so good, that I tore the holes a little bigger so I could have the goodness touch me. That's the really truth."

"Oh! queer little Janet!" said Miss Rose. "But, dear, I want you to be tidy like all the other children; so if I get another nice gown will you keep it for kindergarten, and only wear this when you want to feel the — the goodness?"

"Deed and deed I will! And now a kiss and a cheek, Miss Rose." This meant a kiss and a soft press against Miss Rose's pretty cheek. So the tidy gown was bought, and the little tattered one set aside for special purposes.

The mother was very busy now. Work flowed in because of Janet's popularity at the kindergarten, and Janet herself was left largely to her own resources. There was always the evening, though, and the blessed voyage in the creaky chair, the garden, and the dreams behind the eyelid land.

Miss Rose often kept the keen little Princess all day. She disliked having her roam the streets so much, and it was so delightful

to teach the quick mind. Kindergarten lessons were well enough, but Janet learned to read besides, and when Miss Rose gave her a book of witchy tales, and she found that she could disentangle the story for herself, why, the mad little Princess was almost beside herself with joy. And she was only six and a half too!

Of course Miss Rose thought that when Janet was on the street she was doing what other children did; but Miss Rose was wrong. Do you think the Princess ever left the damaged lamb, the interrupted alphabet-blocks, and the joy-giving fire engine for anything so foolish as the gutter? Nay, nay. When Janet was not with Miss Rose, or the heavenly toys, she was seeking her garden. Dear, faithful little heart! She knew she must find it some day, with all its flowers and beauty; then she and her mother would be happy ever after.

Not so often did she think of the lost garden

as she used to, but when she did she squared her little shoulders and sallied forth. Sometimes she would drag the engine after her, but oftener she hugged the woolly lamb. It was such a comfort. The alley, where first she had found the lamb, had been for a long time a point of interest. She had thought, perhaps, other blessings would rain down upon her, and she wished she could see the strange boy who had flung his treasures so madly, and then had been overpowered at last by such a cross-looking lady. But no more toys descended upon the Princess, and a tall screen stood inside the window of that upstairs room.

So winter had passed and spring come. With the call of distant birds and flowers, the Princess one day thought of her lost garden with almost a pain in her heart. The mother was away with some work, there was bread and cheese for a dinner, and the lame lamb for company; so Janet put on her dress

with the holes, pinned the bread and cheese in the turned-up skirt, clasped the lamb to her heart, and went out.

Something seemed to call her. It was the voice of Spring, but the dear Princess did not know that. She only knew that she yearned for her garden until her eyes grew dim.

"I — I want the smell of a flower," she said; "I want to — to hug a tree!" Then she smiled under the tears like a real April fairy, and ran happily along.

How the *goodness* crept in the noles of the tattered dress! How the little body thrilled and glowed! And suddenly Janet saw that she was in the Street of the Tall Wall, and the Screened Window! Then a thought came to her: she would make believe that she was a blind Princess! She would feel along the wall until — until ——! and then when she opened her eyes how *glad* she would be that she was *not* blind, and how heavenly it would seem to *see* the sunny day! Then she would

eat her bread and cheese, and nurse the lamb, and afterward go on and hunt for the garden.

So shut went the big eyes — they were quite blue, for the sun was shining, you know; and one dirty, dimpled hand felt along the wall, while the other held the lamb, and so groped the Princess!

Oh, but it was a long wall! And suddenly there was a turn; but do you think the Princess opened her eyes? Not a bit of it. When Janet did a thing she did it thoroughly.

"How perfectly horrid it is to be blind!" she whispered, taking the turn bravely. "I guess if I could see I would be a pretty happy princess, even if my legs did ache!"

You remember the dear Princess had walked a long way, and the feet were a bit weary. Just then there was no wall, and Janet decided it was time to open her eyes. For a moment the bright Spring sunshine dazzled her, then she looked, and a soft, bewildered "oh!" fluttered from her parted lips. She

hugged the lamb closer, repeated over and over "oh! oh! oh!" and looked and looked.

The wall had given place to a big iron gate, and the gate stood wide open, as if in welcome to Princess Rags and Tatters. Inside was a garden so fair and beautiful that even a person better acquainted with gardens than dear Janet might well pause and enjoy. The tender, young greenness was over everything, and brave, early flowers were showing in border beds and under trees. There was a joyous fountain throwing up sparkling streams of glittering spray, and a company of gay birds hopping near by.

"My garden!" whispered Janet, "oh, my garden!" Then she ventured into the paradise almost fearfully, although she truly believed it was her very own blessed garden.

How soft the grass was, and how cool to the hot little tired feet! Tiptoeing to a nearby tree, Janet put the lamb down, and — hugged the tree! she lay her dear, happy face

against the rough bark, and laughed at the "sharp little kiss." Never in all her life had that tattered princess been so happy. Then a sound startled her. Some one was in the garden — her garden. She snatched up the lamb and waited. Down the smooth driveway the some one was coming, and who should it be but Charles Theodore Avery on wheels! Not carriage wheels this time, but skate wheels; and he was not on them all the time either; most every other plunge he made his wheels were in the air and his head was on the drive. Angelina was not in sight, nor indeed were any other of the keepers. Charles Theodore Avery had stolen a march on them, taken his new roller skates and determined he would conquer or die! Every time he bumped down he grew angrier and redder. The bumps hurt, and he felt humbled and frightened.

Janet, from behind the tree, watched the plunging oncomer with bated breath. Per-

haps this was *not* her garden! Maybe it was a *park*. She remembered the boy — he was the wild boy of the flying toys. Just then a strap broke on one of the skates; off it flew and down sat Charles Theodore Avery so hard that he gasped. Then he arose in his might, grasped the skate, and flung it with all his strength, crying:

"Take that — you — you old thing!"

It landed at Janet's feet, and she sprang back. For a moment she thought the boy was at his old tricks, and that there was going to be another deluge of toys. She picked up the skate with doubtful pleasure, and then Teddy saw her.

"That's mine!" he shouted rudely. "Put it down!" Janet obeyed at once. Then Teddy recognized her, and a feeling of pleasure stole up and down his high-born spine. He scented liberty and fun. The very sight of the breezy little Princess inspired both. Her yellow curls were tossing about in the jolliest

manner; she was all dimples and twinkles, and the dirty woolly lamb was her passport to favour.

"Hello!" said Teddy. "How did you get here?"

"Walked," briefly replied the Princess. "You're almost a cry baby," she added. "It's dreadful silly to get mad and act like that."

"Well, I thought I could do it," explained Teddy without taking the least offence at the plain speech. "And, anyway, I did *not* cry."

"I'll show you how to skate," said the Princess, going nearer. "I learned on Timmy Murphey's. He only had one — it's like wings."

Teddy took off his good skate and gave it to Janet. In a moment she was off like a bird, arms waving, curls flying, and the unwheeled foot touching the ground now and then to balance the light little body.

Teddy laughed until the tears ran down his cheeks. He clapped and encouraged this giddy young person.

"If it's such fun on one!" cried Janet, dashing past, "what must it be on two? Hooray!" Then presently she came back. "Give me that other skate," she said.

"It's broken," Teddy returned, and into the sunshiny day came a ghostly memory of the Bouncer.

"That comes of your silliness," snipped Janet. "Now I've got to waste time mending it."

Side by side they sat and worked over the broken strap. Finally, by means of a string and much ingenuity, the thing was managed. Janet tried it on. It would go, but, alas! so would she. One skate had proved a winged victory; two — an ignominious tumble. Bang! went the pretty head on the hard asphalt, and the Princess saw stars that the Spring day was in no wise accountable for.

Teddy looked aghast. He expected to hear the air rent by screams, but no such thing occurred. The Princess lay quite, quite still. She had had many a hurt in her life and she had learned to bear them in that silent fashion. Teddy bent above her.

"What — what are you doing?" he asked.

"Thinking," she quivered, "thinking and wondering."

"What about?" Teddy was deeply touched.

"Thinking and wondering how soon my head will stop whizzing around so that I can get up."

The sweet face on the ground was pitifully pale. Teddy reached down and lifted the little golden head gently.

"Is it better?" he asked.

"Oh! muchly better." The dimples were returning. "And now I'll try again!"

The second time she conquered. Then Teddy tried, went down before Fate; grinned and went at it again. Finally the two con-

querors stood abreast and eyed each other as such noble souls do.

"You're all right!" said Teddy.

"You're bully!" said the Princess, using the language of her court.

Then they sank down to rest and exchange confidences about the lamb, which had been rather neglected during the more exciting romp.

"What — what have you got in your — your dress?" Teddy asked suddenly.

"Oh! my dinner." The Princess laughed delightedly. "It's good it isn't squashed."

"Dinner?" blurted Teddy, whose ideas regarding dinner did not tally with a hard lump in a dirty dress. "Let's see!"

The bread and cheese were promptly disclosed.

"Want some?" The Princess smiled generously. "We'll play banqueet."

This needed explanation, which was cheerfully and exhaustively given. Then they

munched hard bread and cheap cheese while they dug their heels into the soft green turf.

"Do you know," said the Princess presently, "that just at first I thought this was my garden."

Teddy had already confided about his lost grandfather, so he replied loftily:

"When I find my grandfather I'm going to tell him about you. I think I shall marry you and then this will be your garden."

The Princess puckered up her delightful little mouth and eyed Teddy calmly.

"Perhaps," she said, "I'd rather have my own garden. I'd have to think about it — a long while."

Teddy's face grew grim.

"I'd give you half," he whispered.

"I'll — I'll think." The Princess did not capitulate easily.

Just then a terrified scream shattered the peace of the fair garden.

"Master Charles Theodore! Master Charles Theodore Avery!"

Angelina bore down upon the two like an avenging host. Fury was in her eye and fright and anger distorted her features. She seized Master Charles Theodore and shook him until he opened his mouth to expostulate. Then a new horror entered Angelina's mind.

"What are you eating?" she gasped.

"Cheese. Let me alone!"

"Cheese?" Then: "You bad child! The gate open, too. Oh, but the gardener shall pay for this!"

Just then her eye lighted upon Janet.

"Who is this — this common child?" she gasped.

"She isn't common!" Teddy dragged himself from the clutch upon his shoulder. "She's a princess. It's her cheese I'm eating and —I —I love her!"

This was too much. Angelina fairly hissed.

"Out of here, you bold, bad creature, and

if I ever see you around the place again I'll turn you over to the peleece!"

Poor, dazed Janet stooped, picked up her lamb, held it close to her little throbbing heart, and backed affrightedly out of the beautiful garden. The great gate clashed to after her, and from behind it the infuriated wails of the unsubdued Charles Theodore rent the air.

"Just at first — I thought it *was* my garden!" sobbed the pretty little exile; "just at first. But I — I will have to look some more."

CHAPTER FOUR

SOMETHING HAPPENS

Of course there was no one to tell about the sad happening; so Janet kept it to herself in true princess fashion. The mother with her endless work must not be worried by things that made Janet's heart ache. Very, very early the dear little girl learned that, and tried always to smooth away the sorry look from "mudder's" face. And, after all, there was the blessed garden every day at the end of the rocking chair voyage! Sometimes Janet thought that garden was better even than the one that lay somewhere for her to find. That beautiful magic garden was so *sure* and faithful! It never, by any possibility, disappointed one. If any little thing was wrong, or out of place, how easy it was to set it right! Often the far-away

gardens have that charm, and our little Princess learned it before most children do.

She was getting to be quite a big princess, too; her nimble feet almost reached the floor when she snuggled in mother's arms. Indeed, by stretching, they did touch, and she helped the creaking rocker along on its way.

There were moments when Janet seriously thought that she would tell Miss Rose about the boy and the big garden — and the terrible woman who so angrily thrust her out with the dire threat of a policeman. But Miss Rose, understandable as she was, had her limits. Janet tested her.

"Miss Rose, dear," she questioned one day as she sat on the schoolroom floor after the other children had gone; "Miss Rose, dear, just *what* is a common child?"

The little Princess was huddled up in her favourite attitude, hugging her knees, and the late Spring sunshine seemed to centre all around the dear little heap in the most com-

forting way. Miss Rose always felt a lump rise in her throat when she realized how very beautiful Janet was, and then thought of — well, all the long road to the Garden!

"Dear little Princess" — they were making believe, and so "Princess" and "Miss Rose, dear," were in order — "there *are* no common children. There are just good children and those not *so* good, but who are *going* to be!"

"Then, Miss Rose, dear, how did any one happen to know the name?"

Miss Rose pondered. It *is* a puzzle how people know names for what does not exist.

"Oh, they are just pretending," she said. Pretending! Certainly Miss Rose could never understand if she thought that terrible woman could pretend.

"Am I a common child, Miss Rose, dear?"

The sweet upraised eyes were as blue as violets.

"You, dear Princess? How can you be such a precious little goose? You are most *un*common."

Evidently some one was in error, so Janet sighed, smiled and made up her mind that she would go back to the mistaken garden, and perhaps unravel the error some day.

Janet was reading wonderful things now. Great big, thrilling stories about history folks. Oh! they were more wonderful even than story folks. And Janet could sew a little, too, and she meant to try to do better, for she saw a chance to help mother along that line. She did not like to sew. It was very pokey to sit still and patiently jab the shining needle in and pull it out. Still, when you sat quiet enough and long enough, the result was remarkable. And Janet loved results. One day, sitting by Miss Rose, she said dreamily, as she plied her needle:

"See, Miss Rose, dear, the cloth *welcomes* the needle!"

"Why, you little poet-princess!" laughed Miss Rose. "Let us see if we cannot turn that thought into a tiny song so the other children may sing it at the sewing class." And this is the song Miss Rose made of Janet's pretty thought:

Bright little needle,
Shining on your way,
Listen to the waiting cloth,
Hear what it will say.

"Welcome, useful needle!
Without you what am I?
I cannot change myself alone,
No matter how I try.

"But by working hard together,
Shiny needle, you and I,
We can make a lovely present
For mother by and by."

And now, little children,
Work and sing
And welcome very lovingly
Every helpful, willing thing.

And every Saturday morning ten small girls sang Janet's song while they made a present for "somebody's" Christmas.

But Janet did not read and study and sew all the time. She had her wandering spells, when, casting aside every care, and with pretty head held high, she just *went.* She found the Park, and revelled in it. She made friends with a perfectly delightful policeman named Mr. Pat. At first he almost frightened her to death; but she soon found that park policemen and alley policemen were different. Mr. Pat was charming. When Janet asked him if she and her mother could live in the Park by and by, if they could not find their own garden, Mr. Pat said:

"Shure!" and he'd "loike ter see the corporation that would prevint, so long as he walked his beat!" This was very comforting, and Janet realized that if the worst came to the worst, a house in the Park with mother would not be so bad; and if Mr. Pat

prevented the corporation from interfering it might be very pleasant. Janet did not know what a corporation was, but imagined it to be a prowling animal of some kind that Mr. Pat was always on the lookout for.

There was another useful thing about the Park, too; it was near "the garden of the terrible woman." Janet somehow felt freer to go to the high wall while she thought that in case of danger she could scream for Mr. Pat. If he could manage a corporation, he might be able to manage "the woman."

Again and again did the Princess go to the high wall. She did not play blind any more, but used her bright eyes and keen ears, both. The iron gate was always closed, and a silence reigned inside. But oh! how the garden blossomed and bloomed. Flowers, flowers everywhere, and oh! the heavenly smell! Janet, with great daring, put her little pug nose through the bars, and sniffed and sniffed.

"Dearie gracious!" she often thought, "if I only could have *one* flower for mudder, which would I choose?" Then came a long, delightful puzzling. Among so much beauty, how could she choose?

"Dearie gracious! since I cannot have one flower, how I do wish I could take some smell home to mudder!"

Then she had an inspiration. She found a box on the sidewalk one day, an old discarded candy box, but it had a cover, and it was whole. She took the box to the high iron gate, opened it halfway, and held it so the spring breeze wafted the fragrance right toward it. Patiently she stood, her dear little face radiant and tense. Then suddenly, snap! went the cover and away ran the nimble little feet. That night in the creaking rocker Janet held the box close to the mother's face.

"Mudder," she whispered, "does the smell from gardens last?"

"Yes, yes, bairnie, I think it lasts forever.

Why, I have just to close my eyes and I can smell — let me think!" she closed her tired eyes and swayed to and fro.

"I smell early roses, and border pinks, and — and oh! so many sweet things!"

Janet was delighted. She undid the cover, and whispered, "Smell again, mudder; don't you smell a traily vine thing that is — lovely?"

The mother smiled.

"I do, Janet lass!" Then she looked at the empty box, and the little excited face.

"I could not get a flower, mudder;" said the soft voice, "but nobody can keep the smells from us, can they mudder?"

"No, bairnie, nor the memories."

And that night the trip was unusually eventful; and the garden more delightful.

But one day when Janet wandered to the iron gate something happened. The gate was securely fastened, but it could not keep out smell and sound, and it did not seem to

want to keep out the glorious view — it was a very generous gate as to openings between bars!

"Goody!" panted Janet, clinging to the railings. "That big bush is all bursted with happiness! I've just been longing to see what coloured happiness it is — it's pink!" Then she drew in a long, joyous breath. "Dearie gracious! if I only could touch it." There was a sad yearning in the tender tones.

"Princess!" Janet almost fell from the gate. "I'm here!" And sure enough there he was close down by the inside of the gate among the bushes — the boy of the garden!

"Where's she?" whispered Janet, looking the landscape over.

"Gone!" gurgled Charles Theodore Avery with rapture; "the gardener saw her that day she acted so like fury, and he told the butler, and the butler told the governess, and the governess told my mother's maid,

and so Angelina is — went — gone, I mean. And now I can play in the garden two whole hours every day when Saunders is fussing around — and so long as the gate's shut. Saunders is the gardener; he's a nice man!"

"Oh!" breathed Janet, and a wide hope grew in her eyes; "do — do you think if he is nice he — he would give me just *one* flower?"

"Huh!" and Charles Theodore Avery arose in all his landed might, "I'll give you all you want!" With that he strode mightily into the midst of the glorious bloom, and with generous clutch gathered a rich harvest; but as he came back laded, a new idea struck him, and he made a bargain with the exiled Princess. She was watching him approach in breathless joy.

"If I give you these, will you tell me a story?"

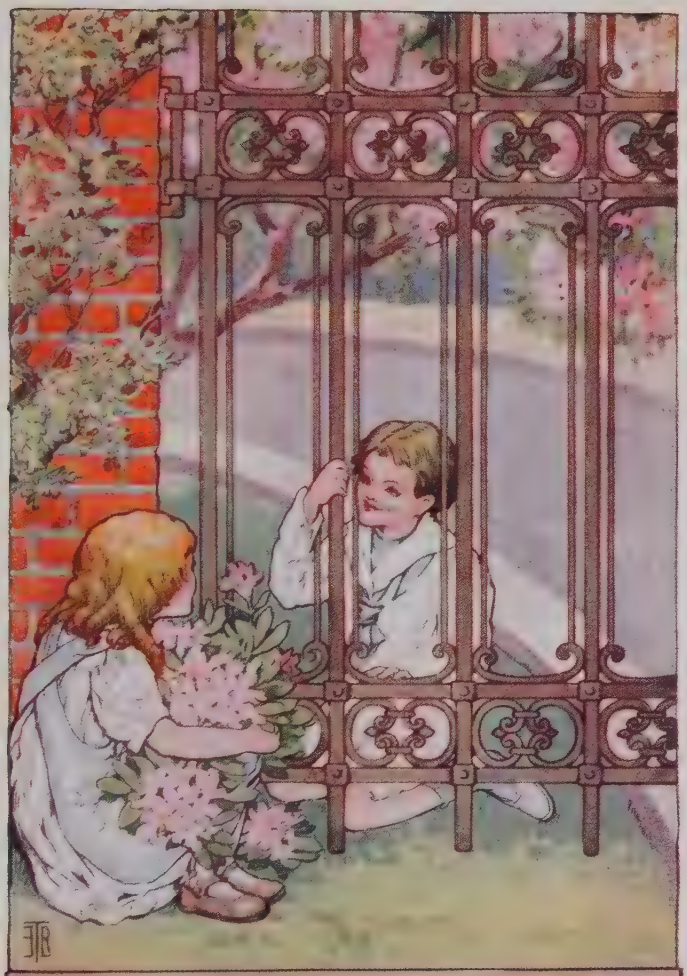
"Oh, millions!" quivered Janet, thrusting her dimpled hands through the bars.

"And will you come again if I give you more?"

"Yes, yes, every day!" The splendour was passed through the railings and the Princess's face was lost to sight as she buried it among the blossoms.

"Oh, me!" came in muffled tones, "oh, me! I never knew they could *tell* how happy they are in just this way!"

But Janet was an honest little soul, and when once her rapture had subsided she sank down upon her side of the gate, and Teddy huddled close on the other, and I wish you could have heard that story! It was punctuated by Janet's long smells of her flowers, but the interest never flagged. It was about a brave prince who went to battle and lost his sword, and things were looking pretty bad for his side, when all at once he found an old broken sword that one of his soldiers had tossed aside as he ran, like a coward. The prince took the broken sword and went



"I want Mudder to see my Flowers and some of them are getting sleepy."

right on and *won* the fight. Perhaps it was Janet's way of telling the story, but certainly the listener among the bushes had two red spots on his cheeks, and his eyes were like stars.

"And," continued Janet (sniff! sniff!), "I know all about the meaning of that story (sniff! sniff!). The right kind of prince can do more with an old broken thing than a wrong kind of prince can do with — everything!" (Sniff! sniff!)

"Where did you get that story?" breathed Teddy.

"Book! (Sniff!) Read it myself. (Sniff!) Miss Rose 'splained.' (Sniff!)

"Read it yourself! Can *you* read a big, fine story like that?"

"Sure!" A long pause. Then above a branch of roses she held Janet asked, "Can't you?"

"No; I hate reading. It's hard, and when you do get the meaning, everything is— silly!"

"My books are not. And you are a coward if you are afraid of work, and 'less you know things for yourself out of books you are a stupid!"

The boy on the other side heard these plain, unvarnished facts with a brave face, but shamed heart. "I'm going — to try harder!" he whispered.

"And I'll bring my books," nodded the sweet Princess, "and I'll help you with the hard words. I like hard words. I make believe they are puzzles. But now I must go," she sighed gently. "I want mudder to see my flowers, and some of them are getting sleepy."

So off she ran, taking much sweetness and brightness with her, but leaving hope in the heart of a lonely little rich boy who was beginning to know what life meant.

CHAPTER FIVE

POOR LITTLE PRINCESS

Angelina was no more! But madame the governess reigned over half of every day, and nearly always took her outings with Charles Theodore Avery. He, poor boy, just loathed going with her, for she insisted upon talking French all the time. French in the schoolroom was bad enough — outdoors it was misery. They did not go in the carriage any more, for there was a new automobile, and it was being tried on madame and Teddy. The man who managed it was French, and he and the governess could talk in their own language, and Teddy felt almost certain they talked about him — and his family!

Whenever Teddy thought that he sat very straight, and *struggled* to understand the

hated French. One day just as the automobile dashed up the grand avenue opposite the Park a tall, handsome old gentleman came down the stoop of a splendid house — Number 7. Teddy saw the number quite plainly and remembered it for an hour of need.

"Oh! that is he *now!*" rattled madame to Pierre, "that is he!"

"Who?" asked Teddy excitedly, for he had, strange to say, understood every word.

"Ah! it is understanding when we *care* to understand, is it?" said madame suspiciously. "Well, then, Master Charles Theodore, he is one fine physician. The finest in the whole city. How, then, does the knowledge concern you? Have you one great pain? The fine physician would not come to you, no; not even were you to be dying!"

Teddy lost a good deal of this, and really it did not matter. He wondered why

madame and Pierre should take such an interest in a — physician!

Many times after that when the automobile was on the avenue the tall, stern, old gentleman was seen, and always madame and Pierre turned to look at him.

"Would he come to you or Pierre were you ill?" asked Teddy one day.

"Merci! I think not. What think you, Master Charles Theodore, are Pierre and myself made of the gold?"

"No," sighed Teddy. "Of course not."

Now Saunders, the gardener, was quite another matter from Pierre and madame. He did not talk much, but when he did he used plain unvarnished Yankee, and he had the way of looking at you that made you feel you were his equal and not a thing to be scorned and insulted.

If Saunders knew of the meetings by the big gate he kept it to himself as a gentleman should. He never remarked about two little

nests of pressed down grass — one inside, one outside, the gate. Saunders had considerable trouble with his eyes at times when he talked with Teddy, and he had a trick of winking that was very humorous and chummy.

"There be ways *and* ways of picking flowers, Master Ted," he said one day, "and a fine fellow like you does not want to make mistakes along them lines. Now to my mind the yanking off of buds real heedless is downright cruel. Give 'em a chance to see what they can do, say I."

"I say so, too," agreed Teddy, with a contemplative gleam in his eyes.

"And there be seasons for things," Saunders continued. "Every flower in its time, say I."

"I say so, too," said Teddy. And then and there he took a valuable lesson from Saunders, and the Princess's bouquets showed the result of it later.

So the flowers were passed through the

iron gate, and the stories and "help with big words" likewise. When Teddy begged to have stories read instead of puzzling them out, Janet grew stern and unyielding.

"Are you a 'fraid cat?" she would ask indignantly.

"No!"

"Then come on and let's *dig* the story out."

They struggled and stumbled up the road of knowledge right bravely. They dug the stories out while beads of perspiration stood on their furrowed brows. When they could study no more from sheer weariness, they talked and laid splendid plans for a future rich in gardens and most knightly grandfathers.

"I think," said the Princess one day, "that I will not marry you, Teddy. I want a garden all of my own. Besides, I don't believe I'm going to like your grandfather."

"Oh!" Teddy pressed his face to the bars.

"You can have the garden for your own — but what's the matter with my grandfather?" Teddy was touchy about his grandparent.

"I don't like grandfathers who leave all the hunting for little boys!" The Princess sniffed scornfully and pointed a rather grimy finger at Teddy.

"He ought to call up the perleece; Mr. Pat says so."

This was a new idea and it rather dashed Teddy's ardour.

"Can't Mr. Pat look for my grandfather?" he asked. And that opened a theme of conversation that lasted until, from a far distance, Saunders was heard remarking:

"He'll be on hand at once, madame. Such a chap is he for being on time."

Then off scampered the Princess, and Teddy turned to the affairs of state, that were stupid enough, to be sure, but could not be overlooked.

Another day when the Princess presented

herself Teddy told her that he was stretching and stretching every once in a while to reach the latch of the big iron gate.

"What for?" asked Janet with sudden interest.

"I'm going to run away."

"Where to?"

"Oh! places." Then suddenly: "How does it feel to be on the outside of things all the time, Janet?"

The Princess thought for a moment. This was a question that must be considered from many sides besides the outside.

"It feels" — she said presently — "it feels sort of loose and kind of — lonely. When you get hungry or tired or scared it's — it's funny unless your mudder is near, but then when you want to *go* it's great!"

"Well, inside," Teddy explained, "it feels tight and choky. You feel like you do when you want to run in a dream and just get stuck to one place instead. The

inside of you runs, but the outside stands still."

"You can talk real beautiful when you stop to think." Janet looked admiringly at Teddy. "Why don't you think more?"

"I'm thinking a — a great deal these days," sighed the boy. And so he was. His eyes were growing deeper and deeper, and often there was a wistful droop to his mouth that caused Saunders to attend to that stubborn trouble of the eyes as he gazed at the child turning from the big iron gate.

It was not long after this talk by the gate that madame and Teddy went out in the automobile on an errand. They did not go to the Park, nor to the avenue where the great physician lived. Mrs. Avery had sent madame with some rare lace to a lace mender who lived in a queer little house in Mulberry Lane of all places! Of course Teddy had not the slightest idea that his Princess lived in that poor, noisy neighbourhood; but the

place interested him, for it was so *different.* At first he thought something had happened, for the entire population seemed to be in the street; but madame informed him in broken English that the people were taking their pleasure!

The big red machine dashed, dashed along as if Pierre was bent upon destroying all who took their pleasure in his path. Teddy held his breath as he saw the groups dart away on either side of the huge wheels. They found the queer little house at last, and madame went in with the lace. Then she hurried out, and said: "Drive quickly, Pierre; this street it stifles me!"

So Pierre set the machinery going and off they went faster than ever. Down they bore upon children, dogs, and push carts. Shouts and yells followed them; and now and then a stone! Things were getting exciting and dangerous, and Teddy clutched the leather seat as he bobbed around on its

slippery surface. Suddenly a group in front of them caught his eye — a little, white, frightened face was turned toward him. Others ran screaming away, but that sweet face still stayed in the same spot! Pierre put on the brakes: he muttered and tooted and swerved to the right, but one wheel struck the small girl in its path, and Teddy saw her thrown way to one side!

"It — it — is my Princess!" he gasped in horror, clinging to madame's arm, until she cried in pain. An awful uproar followed:

"Away!" shrieked madame to Pierre. "Away! they will kill us! We will return!" And Pierre did "away!" Teddy shut his eyes, for a sick feeling turned him giddy; but he could not shut out the vision of the dear Princess with her pretty, frightened eyes. All night he saw her in his dreams. He wakened and started, and then buried his face in the pillow, for the Princess had taught him to bear pain in silence.

In the morning he asked madame if she had "gone back?"

"All is well," said madame; "twas but a little thing." And for that day Teddy grew happier. Then he went to the iron gate. Full well he knew that if all were well the dear, faithful Princess would hurry to tell him all about it. But she did not come that day, nor the next, or the many. The little nest outside the gate grew green and straight, and Saunders wondered why the flowers that Teddy was free to cut faded upon the bushes. No one saw the tears a lonely little boy shed on his side the fence. No one saw that same little boy stretch and stretch to reach the latch! And that is the reason that no one saw him catch the latch one day and set himself free.

Ah! but it was a bonny day and Teddy drew in the first *free* breath of his life!

"It does feel — kind of loose!" he said; then he thought of the dear little comrade,

and even in the joyous June day his heart grew sad and heavy.

Was Charles Theodore Avery going in search of his lost grandfather, now that he was free? No, no! He had a more difficult thing on hand. With the knowledge that he was not made of "the gold," and even if he were, that the great physician would not come to him, he was going to the great physician to beg of him to go to the Princess and cure her quickly. For Teddy knew, beyond all doubt, that something awful kept Janet away from him. He knew the way to number 7. It was not far; just beyond the second gate of the Park. He put his hands in the pockets of his white duck knickerbockers, and found the comfort that always lay there. Then he tried to whistle a little, in order to make people think he was quite used to taking a walk by himself every day. The tune came as far as his lips, then trembled away into a queer gurgle. It was a terribly

"loose feeling" to be alone, and the thought of the Princess, while it spurred him to action, yet made his heart anything but a sing-y heart.

"She always was brave!" faltered poor Teddy as he trotted on. The sun was hot, and the way — when you walked it — was much longer than one would suppose. People stared too — and one lady stopped and asked:

"Where are you going, little boy?" That did more than anything else to cause Teddy to brace up.

"On an errand!" he said proudly.

"Oh, excuse me, dear." The lady smiled and passed on. After that Teddy *made* himself whistle, and swing his shoulders as the Princess always did. No one questioned him further. The shoulder trick was evidently a good passport on the highway.

And then he turned into the avenue, and whistled and swung himself along until he came to number 7. He had a bad time

with his breath as he went up the steps. It came in great, solid lumps, and really whistling was quite out of the question. Still there was no one to notice now, and poor Teddy gave undivided attention to his breathing. It seemed to take him an hour to drag himself up the stoop: something blinded his eyes so he could not see at once the little electric button. He pressed what he thought was the button, and found it was only a bit of the carving upon the door. Then he laughed, and his own voice frightened him so that he nearly cried. But he found and pushed the right spot, and the burring inside made him jump. Almost at once the heavy door swayed in, and a small black boy fairly glittering with buttons and teeth stood facing him.

"I — I want — to see — the — the doctor!" wavered Teddy; and he looked as if he really needed the doctor himself.

"Yassir. Walk in." Somehow that "yas-

sir" made Teddy feel pretty good. He walked in, and when the dazzling vision pointed to a little room at the side, he followed the hint and went into the room and dropped into a big easy chair. There was no doctor there, but there was a fussy old gentleman who kept looking at his watch every few moments, then snapping the case to so loudly that Teddy jumped every time.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the old man at last, when Teddy's jumps attracted his attention.

"Nothing, sir"; answered the boy, sitting bolt upright on the edge of the chair.

"Nerves!" mumbled the man, "nerves. The rising generation is *all* nerves!" Again he snapped his watch, and again Teddy jumped.

"Stop it!" commanded the old man. "Control yourself. What do you think you will be at *my* age if you go on jumping like that?" (Snap!) But Teddy sat as rigid as an iron soldier.

"Umph!" grunted the old gentleman, "how old are you?"

"Going — on — to — eight!" whispered Teddy. The quiet room, the queer old man, and the lookout for the *snap* were steadying him.

"Umph!" Just then the door opposite was opened, a lady came out and was shown to the front door by Master Buttons, and a clear, firm voice called:

"This way, please." It was the doctor, from across the hall. The old gentleman sprang to his feet and Teddy prepared to follow, but the old gentleman whispered:

"Your turn next, son. Good-by. And remember — don't jump if you hear a noise! Get a grip on yourself while you're young."

After the old man was gone a palpitating stillness settled down. Once Master Buttons came to the door, winked, grinned, and departed. Teddy hoped he would return, but he did not, and the minutes stretched

away. A tall clock counted them off in solemn tones, and the boy on the edge of the big chair felt his throat getting dryer and dryer. Then a portrait on the wall claimed his attention and he forgot his misery. It was very strange, but soon the face looking down upon Charles Theodore became most familiar and friendly. It seemed to be wanting to brace him up, and Teddy got down from his chair and stood under the portrait, his hands clasped behind his back: his legs wide apart.

Where had he seen some one who looked so much like that handsome young man above him? Teddy thought and thought and then suddenly it came to him — it was like a picture of his own dear father which stood on his mother's dressing table at home!

How often he had seen his beautiful mother gazing at that other face as he was gazing at this one. She used to smile sadly,

and once — Teddy recalled the scene quite vividly — she had kissed the picture and cried.

The small boy decided that if the great physician was not too overpowering he would ask him who the friendly young man was who looked so like his dear, dead father.

"This way, please."

The fussy old gentleman had gone and the doctor was calling, rather impatiently for his next visitor; but the visitor was, apparently, stone deaf.

"This way — *please!*"

Master Buttons came to the rescue.

"You'se — wanted!" he exclaimed, thrusting his head into the reception room. Then — for the further enlightenment — "Hustle!"

Teddy heaved a deep sigh. It was rather difficult to turn from that strong, kindly face and take up his heavy burdens again.

As he walked into the office across the hall he stepped languidly and there were

blue shadows under the tired eyes and a queer, quivering line about the grim little mouth.

The great physician looked sharply at him, started, and then gripped the arms of his mahogany chair.

CHAPTER SIX

TO THE RESCUE

Charles Theodore sank into a chair facing the doctor and crossed his duck-clad legs. He smiled rather uncertainly and then said:

"My throat feels queer; it feels as if it was opening and shutting too fast."

The doctor got up and brought a glass of water.

"Perhaps that will help:" he said, as if *his* throat were opening and shutting too fast.

"Did your mother send you here?" The deep voice was not unkindly.

"Oh, no, sir. And if you please I would not have her know for anything. It would worry her. You see she sings almost every night — I've never heard her, but Angelina used to say she was wonderful only" —

the quavering voice hesitated — "we have to be awful careful not to worry her. It might hurt her voice."

A sharp line grew between the doctor's eyes. He did not ask about the singing — he knew all about it!

"What do you want?" he said presently. Teddy eyed him. The words were sharp, but something in the voice made the small boy want to go nearer. But he dared not follow the impulse — he waited.

"Why, sir, I know that you would not come to me — or — or mother."

"How did you know that?"

"Madame says so, and so did Angelina."

"Madame and Angelina seem to know a good deal."

"Yes, sir, they do. Angelina's gone, but madame keeps on knowing a great many things. She's my governess."

"Umph! Well, what have you come here for?"

"I want"—and oh, how the wan little face quivered! — "I want you to go to the Princess. You are one great physician and she — she — is hurt!"

"The Princess? What Princess?"

"Her other name is Janet. Our automobile ran over her. Madame says she's all right, but I'm sure she — isn't! She never comes now to her side of the fence and she would if she was all right. She *never* fails. She's the faithfulest girl you ever saw and — and as brave as anything!"

The doctor was so completely puzzled that he could not even ask a question. He got up and refilled Teddy's glass.

"Drink this slowly," he commanded, as if by that process some light might be thrown on the subject. "Drink it sip by sip."

Teddy obeyed, and his face relaxed.

"Now go on!"

"I'll try. You see I cannot sleep much, my head's awfully tired and my tongue gets

rather big for my mouth. Water *does* help a good deal. You see it was this way: Pierre was driving our machine and madame and I were in the back seat. My mother sent us to see about some lace. The lace woman lives on the street where the Princess lives, only we didn't know until"— Teddy gave a grab for the glass and sipped its strengthening liquid — "until — well, until I saw the Princess playing in the middle of the street. It's rather an awful street and there are a great many children. Pierre just went — whiz! and the car struck the Princess and she went! And oh! I see her going and going every time I shut my eyes!"

There was one big vital fact in all this jumble, and the doctor clutched it.

"Do you know where that street is?" The voice was as tense as Teddy's own.

"Yes, sir. I saw it as plain as anything, and it's called Mulberry Lane. Madame told Pierre to drive fast, for they were throw-

ing things at us. Madame said she would go back afterward, but I think she has forgotten; she forgets a good many important things."

The doctor passed his hand over his eyes as if to shut out the sight of the wan, young face before him.

"How long ago was it?"

"I guess — a week. No; ten days. I counted the days, and put a mark on the gate post."

"How did you know about me?"

"Oh, madame is always talking about you to Pierre as we drive by. She says you are one great doctor."

"Umph!" A silence followed, while the doctor put things in a black satchel.

"Do you think you could show me the house — or the spot where the accident happened — if I took you to Mulberry Lane?" he said at length.

"Oh, I am sure I could, sir. I saw them

pick her up and go in a door. It's an awfully funny house for a Princess, but then you know she's a lost Princess."

The doctor did not mean to get lost himself in the maze of Teddy's remarkable story, so he said quietly:

"Now we'll go and take a look at this damaged Princess of yours."

Together they started forth. As they passed the reception-room door Teddy looked in.

"It does look awful much like him!" he murmured.

"Like whom?" The doctor paused.

"Like my father."

A hand, strong and gentle, clasped Teddy's.

"It was wonderfully like him!" was the startling reply.

Charles Theodore Avery looked up quickly. "Did — did you know — my father?" he asked.

"Yes, long ago; before — before you were born!"

But Buttons was showing them out and

the affairs of the Princess drove other things aside.

"Mulberry Lane!" commanded the doctor to a plum-coloured, uniformed coachman who awaited them below, and away they bowled.

Thus they came to the dirty alley and the houses so pitifully alike. They soon found where the Princess lived, for every one knew about the poor little injured girl.

"She's terrible bad!" was the universal verdict, and Teddy's heart sank.

The doctor left him in the carriage, merely saying:

"Sit still until I come down."

Teddy sat still. He fixed his eyes upon the two shining silver buttons on the plum-coloured back up above. The noises of the street surged around him, but he continued to sit still.

What was happening in the third-story back? Oh, how long the great doctor stayed!

Two or three dirty children came to the

carriage and made rude remarks about "white clothes" and kids "thinkin' themselves some"; but Teddy obeyed orders and sat rigid. At last the doctor came back. Something had happened surely. The handsome face was grim and set. It forbade questioning.

"Seventeen Terrace Court," the quiet order was given; and even in his trouble Teddy wondered how the great doctor knew that *he* lived there? Not a word was spoken until the iron gateway of his home was reached; then the doctor said:

"You may leave — the Princess to me. You may trust me, my child!" Then, as Teddy stepped down and thanked him, the stern voice grew sterner as it muttered:

"You've probably given them a fright; and serves them right, too; they deserve to have their eyes opened."

When Teddy reached the house he found it in wild commotion. Madame was rushing

up and down the hall; the servants were talking all at once; but above them madame was shrieking.

"And his mother — ah! merci! what will his mother do to me? Go, Saunders, go at once directly to the po-leece house, and tell them to find Master Charles Theodore before five of the clock, and to them I will give money from my own purse."

Saunders was rushing to do the bidding when he almost stumbled over Teddy — the returned wanderer.

"Where have you been — oh! most bad boy?" cried madame, darting toward him.

"I'm — not — going — to tell you!" said Teddy, with the light of freedom in his eyes; "and I'm never going to tell. I — I want my luncheon, and a drink of water!"

"Master Theodore, come this way!" It was the stony butler who spoke, and he sounded almost kind. Teddy fairly flew to him.

"Perhaps you would like to bathe your

face and hands? By that time I will have the luncheon served."

Respect and pity were in the man's tone, and poor, troubled Teddy rose to the occasion. Never in all his life was Charles Theodore Avery to forget the friendship which grew, from that day, in his heart for the tall butler! The luncheon was served on a small table in the bay window, where the summer breeze could fan the hot face; it was a cool, soft luncheon which slipped down a choky little throat with the least possible discomfort. Only once did the butler unbend and speak to him upon a different matter than food; then he said, looking off into the distance: "You have the look of your father, Master Charles Theodore, and — I would not let them put upon me!"

"Nor will I!" replied Teddy, looking up wearily, but courageously. "I'm going — on eight!"

The long afternoon stretched away drearily.

Madame did not suggest lessons, but she did suggest lying down upon the couch. This idea Teddy adopted, and then something most extraordinary happened. Madame proposed reading aloud to him!

"Any tale," she added, "and in the English."

Teddy seized upon this offer greedily and, lying back among the cushions, he managed to disentangle from madame's peculiar English a rather interesting story.

When dinner time came Teddy's frugal meal was served to him by the couch side. It was an unusually tempting meal. Teddy imagined his new friend the butler had had something to do with it. It had the same cool, soft consistency that the luncheon had had.

Mrs. Avery was in her room down the hall, dressing. Teddy heard her humming a tune now and then, as if she were very happy and light-hearted. Perhaps she was glad

that soon she was going across the ocean — the lonely child upon the couch had heard the rumours of the proposed trip.

"And you and I, Master Charles Theodore," madame had gone on to explain, "will see the mother sail and then go ourselves to the mountains to cool off. And in the autumn! Merci! And now tell me, Master Avery, how would a fine, new father please you?"

All this disturbing memory came clearly to the small boy as he heard his mother singing to herself. How sweet her voice was! How it trilled like a bird's and whispered like the breeze.

Teddy arose and made himself ready for bed. He was tired and, by making believe he was asleep, he could escape any further attentions from madame. Besides, he wanted to think of the Princess so safe now, with the great doctor in charge, and of the idea of a new father.

Now that that idea presented itself to him he found it quite terrifying. He buried his head in the pillow and cried softly and miserably. Presently he turned over and looked at the white moon peeping in through the curtains. Then he heard approaching steps and he closed his eyes. Of course it was madame, and the thought of madame just then was intolerable.

There were tear stains on Teddy's face, but there was also an expression of strong, brave suffering when some one — not madame — stooped to look at it.

Long, long did that some one gaze upon the boy, and strange memories seemed to cluster around him. How like that little face was to another! And that other had left *all* for her. All, all! Perhaps he had never known how much it had meant. And what had she given in return?

Down sank the somebody beside the narrow white bed. An arm slipped under Teddy's

moist neck. He dared not open his eyes; his breath came short!

"Childie, childie, I cannot do it! You and I, laddie, must keep together — in you I can keep — him!"

A kiss fell upon Teddy's tear-stained cheek; then another on his mouth that was twitching painfully. Was all this — a dream? Well, then, Teddy meant to hold the dream, so he put his arms up and folded them around that blessed vision.

"My boy! my big, little boy! Daddy's little Ted!"

All the loneliness of two hearts was dashed away in one bright moonlighted minute!

And what a talk they had!

"We'll let madame go to Europe, Teddy-linkums. You and I will go together somewhere; anywhere, but together."

"Mother!"

"Say it again, dearie. Say 'Mother' over and over."

And Teddy said it over and over.

Then she sang to him. It was a lullaby that once had set a mighty throng of people to shouting with delight.

"Oh," murmured the little one-boy audience now, "that sounds like a — like an angel song. Mother, will you, oh! please, will you, some day sing it to the Princess?"

And then came the story of the lost Princess Rags and Tatters. The skates, the flowers, the little nests by the iron gate, and the one great physician who was caring for the sad little Princess.

"My boy!" That was all when the story was done, but the words sounded like a beautiful song.

"The carriage is below, madame." The maid spoke at the door and she was very much surprised indeed.

The woman on the floor beside the small bed glanced up. Her arms were full of a warm little boy; her beautiful

gown was crumpled, and her lovely hair disarranged.

"The carriage?" she said, as if she had never heard of such a thing before.

"Yes, madame."

"Send it away. I am not going out. Do not disturb me again. Teddy and I wish to be alone."

"And when we find grandfather, mother," Teddy was seeking to comfort, "everything will be all right."

"You have found him, laddie! And everything is going to be all right!"

With that the pretty mother began to weep as if things were about to be as bad as possible.

"Mother! mother, don't cry. Where is my grandfather?"

The boy was sitting up on his pillow and the dear head was against his brave shoulder.

"Let me cry, darling, let me cry. The tears are washing every wrong thing away — the

selfishness, the — the neglect — the loneliness, and — your grandfather, laddie, is the one great physician!"

How still the room was and how holy!

Little by little in his boyish way Teddy put this and that together until a splendid and wonderful whole spread out before him. Then he slipped from his bed and stood beside his mother in the path of the white, white moonlight. It was like one of the Princess's stories, only more thrilling.

"And now, mother, what shall we do next?"

How easy the "we" had become.

"Darling, we must rest and sleep. Come, you must lie beside me to-night. How have I ever done without you? To-morrow — to-morrow, Teddy! That comes next!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE PRINCESS CHOOSES HER GARDEN

"Teddy, I am going to see the Princess.''

"May I go, too?"

"Not to-day, darling."

They were sitting opposite each other at breakfast. The cast-iron butler had undergone a change. As he waited on the two he looked quite limp and feeble. His hands shook as he passed the dishes, and he had a very annoying cough, for which he apologized now and then.

"You may trust mother, Teddy. I'm not very much used to princesses, but I can keep a secret."

What a morning that was! Madame was making hasty preparation for a trip abroad, and the world seemed free to Teddy; even the big iron gate was set wide.

"Do you think you will feel as cool abroad, madame, as you might have in the mountains?"

Teddy felt kindly to the whole world.

"I shall be very comfortable."

Madame's tones were positively respectful.

"And so shall I." Teddy meant no rebuke, but madame eyed him severely.

Saunders, too, had changed — indeed all life was changed.

Teddy and the gardener had a great time that morning. Saunders wanted instructions as to what kind of flowers a little girl might like — colour, smell, etc., considered.

"There's a steady order for a big basketful every day from now on," Saunders explained.

"Where are they going, Saunders?" Teddy's eyes were wide and eager.

"Dear suz!" The gardener wiped his forehead. "I was told that you would know."

"Saunders, I *do* know!"

The gardener nodded.

"I'd like to pick them myself, Saunders."

"I don't know as any one has a better right," said Saunders. "Pick!"

In the meantime Mrs. Avery was driving rapidly to the palace of the lost Princess. She had no trouble finding the way. In Mulberry Lane every one was talking about the happenings in number twenty. Up the long creaky stairs went the pretty lady, and almost reverently she tapped upon the door of the third-floor-back.

"Come in!" A low, hopeless voice made the visitor's heart sink. She opened the door and passed inside. There was no steam in the room — nothing mattered! The poor mother sat in the creaky rocker that was not headed for the dear garden now, but was just swaying idly at the narrow back window.

"Where — where is — the little girl?" panted Mrs. Avery. She was pale and frightened and the long stairs had tired her.

"Gone, ma'am!"

"Gone!" Mrs. Avery sank upon a hard wooden chair. "Gone!" she repeated.

"Yes; my lady. They have taken her away."

"Where — where have they taken her?"

"To the hospital, ma'am. The great doctor would have it so, and I dared not say him nay, though my heart broke. She — was babbling, ma'am, about her garden, till it almost drove me mad — but oh! the stillness now!" The poor mother buried her face in her hands, and cried bitterly. "She said she had found the garden! Oh! my lass. And she begged me to come with her. God knows I long to go — but I fear me my bairnie will never find her way back to me."

"Oh! she will; she must!" Teddy's mother was kneeling on the bare floor beside the Princess's mother, and the work-worn hands were clasped in the soft white ones. "We will bring her back! The great doctor un-

derstands. He is such a wise doctor! Do I not know? And he is so loving to little children. They can always find his heart — he is never stern with them!" The two mothers were looking bravely into each other's eyes, and trying to smile through their tears.

"I did not know anything about it — the awful accident — until last night," said Mrs. Avery. "My servants kept it from me. It has almost made my little boy sick — the hideous secret! He told me last evening, poor little fellow. Do you not see, we *must* bring your child back? She must not go away!"

The poor mother shook her head and murmured:

"My bairn was always talking about the rich little boy; and almost the last knowing thing she said as she slipped into the fever was: 'Tell him I've found my garden, mudder' — she always called me that — 'tell him it is

lovely; and I'll wait on the *inside* — for him, and the *gate will not be shut!*' Them was her blessed words."

"Oh! do not make my heart break!" sobbed Mrs. Avery. "Oh! dear, dear little lost Princess, you shall come back! Come Mrs. McDonald, we will go to the hospital. We will see her for ourselves."

"Will they let us?" A strange eagerness came into Mrs. McDonald's face.

"What hospital is it?"

"The Children's Hospital. The doctor, he wrote it upon this card."

"They will let me in there. Come, my carriage is at the door."

They found the sweet Princess upon a snowy bed in a little, clean room. A gentle-faced nurse stood beside her and whispered: "She is coming along, safely, I think." Then with a queer little smile: "It seems a long way back from her garden — she is

always talking about her garden — but I think the little feet will find the way."

Mrs. Avery knelt beside the cot. Long and wonderingly she looked upon the beautiful face upon the pillow. It looked, indeed, like the pictured Princess Goldilocks. No wonder Teddy had loved her from the very first!

Then the big eyes opened. They were blue as the summer sky, for the sun always shone in the Princess's garden, you know.

"Mudder!" whispered the weak voice, "my owny mudder!" Then a puzzled look rested upon the stranger-lady.

"Dear little Janet, I'm — I'm Teddy's mother."

"The rich little boy?" Janet was feeling her way.

"I — I suppose so. I want to tell you, dear, that the gate is always going to be open now — and the flowers — you must share

them with my little boy. Can you understand, Janet?"

"Yes'm. And tell him I like a garden with him. I choose *his* garden!"

"Shall I sing to you, little Janet?"

"Yes'm."

The lullaby floated through the quiet room. Mrs. McDonald's head bowed until it rested beside the golden one upon the pillow. At the door three or four white-capped nurses stood reverently listening, but neither Janet nor the singer noticed. The eyes of the little Princess were fixed upon the beautiful face; the pain was forgotten, and a strange joy flooded the weak heart.

Then a tall, grave face looked from the corridor into the room, and it saw what brought a sudden light to sad eyes. It was the great physician and he waited until the wonderful song fell to rest in the words:

"Sleep my little one, sleep."

Then the doctor walked in. He looked tall and stern, but the light had not died from his eyes. He went straight to Teddy's mother and took her hand.

"Thank you," he said quietly. "It is many a day since I have heard you sing. You never sang better. Will you wait for me below? I would like to speak to you about Charles Theodore."

And now, of course, comes the most magnificent part of the story about Princess Rags and Tatters.

In the first place, there were to be no more rags, no more third-floor-backs. The first thing to do was to get well. And the Princess and the one great physician set themselves to that task with energy.

The little room in the Children's Hospital overflowed with flowers. The blossoms reached all the other rooms in time and brought smiles to wan faces of children who had never had dreams of fair gar-

dens to solace them while they wandered far.

And Teddy came with his brave face aglow and happy — he and the Princess had wonderful talks. But perhaps best of all were the evening hours — the early evening — when Teddy's mother, with the Princess in a wheel chair and Teddy behind it, went to the ward and sang her magic songs for the weary little soldiers lying in their snowy ranks. Restless hands grew quiet then and aching bodies were forgotten. Gentle, far-seeing eyes gazed beyond the hospital walls and saw — all the dear and pretty fancies that always respond when music calls.

Sometimes, too, the Princess, sitting in her throne-chair, told one of her splendid stories — they were almost, not quite, but almost, as marvellous as the songs.

"You see," dear Janet often ended, "everything is all right. If Teddy's or-ter-bubble hadn't knocked me down I wouldn't" — she

waved her thin hand wide — "have been here, and had all you and — the rest." This always brought forth a quivery little cheer.

"And when I go away from this hospital, I'm coming back many times to see you all." (More quivery cheers!) "And so is Teddy and Teddy's mother — the big doctor says so!" (A really tremendous cheer!)

And then upon a glorious August day the dear Princess — no longer in rags and tatters — went with her own dear mother in the doctor's own carriage to a railroad station.

Wonderful things happened from then on — things that kept the Princess silent from sheer inability to speak.

Think of a nice, cosey bed in a dear little room on a train that was whizzing through space bound for a mysterious place off — somewhere!

And then the magic meal served by a shining, black genii on the oddest table that

just fitted by the side of the comfortable couch.

And the quiet little mother in the trimmest of gray gowns and bonnets sat near by and beamed and beamed at her little girl.

"Mudder," Janet whispered during the day, "am I asleep?"

"No, bairnie."

"Say it again — a little louder."

"No, bairnie, you are very wide awake."

"Where are we going, mudder?"

"I — I think to your garden, dear."

"And when will we get there, mudder?"

"When the shadows come, Janet. Are you tired, lambie?"

"Tired? Why, mudder, my happiness is flying faster than this train. There isn't anything of me to be tired."

There wasn't much, to be sure, but what little there was looked beautifully content.

Sure enough, when the shadows began to fall a strong guard took Janet in his arms and

carried her to a tiny station by the tracks, and in that station were — who do you think?

Why, the one great physician, and Teddy's mother and Teddy himself!

They were waiting for her.

For a moment the Princess's eyes grew dim, then she stretched out her thin arms and whispered:

"Dear folksies!"

It was the doctor who bore her to the waiting carriage. The long train moved away; the whistle tooted:

"Good-by, Janet! Good luck to you!"

And then the little party began to travel slowly up, up a long mountain road.

The trees pressed close and whispered: "We'll give you of our strength, little girl." And the stars peeped out and twinkled with pure joy. There was a smell of woods and shy flowers. Off in the distance a hermit thrush sang his last song of the summer. I am sure he had saved it for Janet!

Then it was that the Princess caught hold of Teddy's hand that was lying conveniently near:

"Is — is — this a garden?" she whispered with a strange, rapt look on her face. And Teddy answered and said a beautiful thing.

"It's God's garden, Janet. There are no fences or gates or anything but open places. And there are high spots where you are awfully near the sky."

And so the dear Princess found her place at last in God's Garden among the hills. Strength came to her and a deeper beauty, and there was the mother always near with the happy light in her eyes.

"There are to be no more third-floor-backs!" Teddy's mother said one day to that other mother. "Just leave that to father and me."

THE END

THE COUNTRY LIFE PRESS
GARDEN CITY, N. Y.

"It's God's garden, Janet."